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INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 9661  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 6878  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 4261  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 1324  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

S E C R E T LA PAZ 001994

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2018  
TAGS: AMER ASEC AMGT PTER BL  
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING-LA PAZ 9/16 1700

REF: LA PAZ 1984 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: RSO Patrick J. Moore, reasons 1.4 c,d

¶1. (U) Summary: EAC meet on 9/16 at 5 p.m. to review the 9/16 demonstrations, discuss information on possible demonstrations for later in the week, review the Bolivian government's reaction to the counter-narcotics certification announcement, and discuss progress on authorized departure. End summary.

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Situation Update  
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¶2. (C) At least four social group marched or met on 9/16. A group of 80 campesinos (small farmers) met in a plaza three blocks from the Embassy, but made no attempt to come to the embassy. A group of 800 students from the El Alto Public University (UPEA) marched downtown to put pressure on the congress to have the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) draft constitution approved; this group never headed toward the Embassy despite earlier threats to do so. A group of 60 campesinos gathered south of the Embassy and marched to put pressure on congress to approve the MAS constitution; this group was diverted from the Embassy by the police. A group of 1000 people supporting the government and protesting against the opposition prefects gathered at three television stations and threatened to destroy the facilities; this group did not attempt to come to the Embassy. As of 4 p.m. all groups had dispersed and none came within fewer than five blocks of the Embassy.

¶3. (C) Sources inform us that a group of 500 opposition supporters is marching toward Santa Cruz, where clashes are expected with MAS aligned groups. New information indicates that the government plans to pressure Santa Cruz by sending MAS-aligned groups to confront the opposition. All USG personnel in Santa Cruz have been relocated to La Paz.

¶4. (C) Although President Morales may react negatively to the announcement of the counter-narcotics certification decision, current events in Bolivia (the arrest of Pando Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez and the possible start of dialogue between the government and opposition) may keep demonstrators focused on domestic issues. However, sources inform us that the chances for dialogue between the opposition and the government have decreased following the government's arrest of opposition Pando Prefect Leopoldo Fernandez. Well-placed sources suggest that the government is considering extending

martial law to the opposition departments of Beni and Santa Cruz. The government-aligned siege of congress has so far not materialized, but many of the potential participants are in La Paz, providing a possible strike force at whatever target the government selects.

¶15. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Hugo Fernandez told Charge 9/16 that Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca had decided not to go to the UNASUR meeting in Santiago, instead staying in La Paz to deal with the security issue of the planned demonstrations against the Embassy. Fernandez said that Choquehuanca had personally spoken to the government-aligned social groups to ask them not to protest at the Embassy and that Choquehuanca had also asked Government Minister Alfredo Rada to ensure appropriate police protection of USG buildings.

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Certification--Government's Initial Reaction  
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¶16. (S/NF) Charge reported that his call to Fernandez to inform him of the upcoming counter-narcotics certification decision did not come as a surprise to Fernandez and also did not elicit a strong response. Charge laid out the reasons and explained the purpose of the waiver. NAS spoke with Vice Minister Felipe Caceres, who had expected the announcement and informed NAS that the government would "nationalize" counter-narcotics activities but would still accept USG cooperation. NAS warned that the government reaction may become more negative as higher-level officials become involved. DEA spoke with FELCN (counter-narcotics police) Director Rene Sanabria, who was surprised by the decision. DEA commented that Sanabria has always focused on his interdiction statistics (which are good) and is "not politically savvy." DEA emphasized the benefits of DEA presence in Bolivia and will work with Sanabria to provide him points on this subject to present to Caceres. DEA reports that Sanabria appreciates the DEA presence and wants it to continue. (See septel for full readout.)

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Authorized Departure Update  
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¶17. (C) Acting on the Department's urging that all personnel and EFMs requesting authorized departure depart by close of business 9/17, the EAC convened and arranged for one (and if needed, two) C130 flights to Lima, departing the morning of 9/17. People who had scheduled later departures on commercial flights have been moved up to the C130 flights when possible (one family was not able to change plans, for example, because of a sick child). Currently 116 people have requested authorized departure and will have departed by close of business 9/17; 30 mission personnel and dependents are currently on the C130 manifest, plus 7 non-official Amcits. If space allows, 5 Peruvian USG contractors will also be on the C130. 10 employees are "caught out", having been outside the country at the time of the authorized departure decision. DEA continues to use its King Air planes to take staff and family out of Bolivia, with three flights scheduled for 9/17.

¶18. (C) Consular and GSO personnel will be present at the Ambassador's residence (the starting point for the C130 flights) the morning of 9/17, and GSO is providing buses to the airport. Charge will accompany the group to the airport. Peruvian visa issues were resolved thanks to Embassy Lima. GSO La Paz is coordinating with GSO Lima. Embassy La Paz has coordinated with Embassy Lima throughout this accelerated departure process, and Embassy Lima has generously offered to receive and help accommodate those on authorized departure. Embassy La Paz is extremely grateful for Embassy Lima's efforts during this challenging time.

¶19. (C) In light of the lack of demonstration at the Embassy on 9/15 and 9/16, the EAC decided that ordered departure is not warranted at this time. EAC decided that staffing would return to normal on 9/17 unless the certification

announcement prompts a significant government reaction or threats of violent demonstrations.

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Actions Considered  
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¶110. (U) The EAC reviewed actions to take and notifications needed for Mission personnel and U.S. wardens. The following is provided:

- a. One and, if needed, two C130 flights will depart the morning of 9/17 to take mission personnel and families, non-official Amcits, and USG contractors (space available) to Lima.
- b. Embassy will operate at normal staffing 9/17, unless information is received to suggest that a violent protest is planned. EAC activated the telephone cascade to inform employees of this decision.
- c. EAC will hold another meeting 9/17 at 10 a.m.
- d. POCs are RSO Patrick Moore ([moorepj@state.gov](mailto:moorepj@state.gov)) and DRSO Daniel Hernandez ([hernandezd@state.gov](mailto:hernandezd@state.gov)), IVG 547-8300.

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